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The Clipper Visits... Mary Lynn Currier

By CHRIS PECK



Mary Lynn Currier

What makes Duxbury teacher Mary Lynn Currier run is a real love of the sport — and a chance to be in the Olympics.

Currier was ranked among the top 10 women marathon runners in the U.S. after finishing with a personal best time of 2:37.01 in the 26-mile Boston Marathon in 1994.

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chlorine gas entered the pool while Currier was swimming. The gas had built up in the pipes during some maintenance work.

Currier was hospitalized after the accident and left with 15% permanent lung damage for being in the wrong place at the wrong time.

Her asthma was aggravated during the Olympic trials by the petroleum fumes fouling the air in Houston, she said.

But she was determined to try again. In 1994, she took a 15th place finish at the Boston Marathon, saying she was the second American female finisher. Her overall ranking has been reduced to 11th in 1996. She represented the U.S. at 2 international events last year. In February, she placed 7th at the Ohme-Hochi Marathon in Ohme, Japan, and in April she was a member of the USA World Cup Marathon Team that competed on the original marathon course in Athens, Greece.

She finished with a strong but disappointing time of 2:48, having been in the top 10 but then dropping down toward the end. When she returned home, she found she had a combination of mononucleosis and Lyme's Disease, something she had been suffering with during the race.

Currier's training came to a halt for the "entire spring and most of the summer. The IV came out of my arm at the end of June and I slowly came back in September to start training," she said.

Her training consists of running 120 miles a week either on the road or on a treadmill. She attempts to do a long run of 20 miles every other week.

She has been having difficulty getting access to an indoor track while fighting the snow, ice, and freezing temperatures during her outdoor training.

"I need to get on a track," she said, adding she has contacted every running club in Boston and finds them all too costly. Also, their rules demand that she wear their uniform to advertise the club when running races.

"The race is not always to the swift but those that keep on running." She adds, "That's the story of my life."

The Snowy Owl, Snug Harbor Antiques, Sandra Sweetser, Wildflower & Marcia Wilhelm.

Mary K. Gilbert with Lisa Bailey, Marguerite Davis and Doris Handy, organized scores of gracious hosts & hostesses, including: Linda Nickles, Nancy McVicker, Lynne Wolfe, Elaine Devnew, Nona Aigler, Marion Martin, Ann Bowman, Marcia Wilhelm, Jane Vanhaur, Rose Romano, Betsy Boles, Diane Monaghan, Debbie Drain, Kye Rogerson, Lindy Webbe, Bea Richards, Bea Willis, Lynn Smith, Kit Clapp, Louise Sanger, Carol Wymore, Dot Byrne, Polly Nash, Barbara Root, Sarajane Rinckenberger, Jean & John Joline, Libby & Charlie Cousins, Barbara Leahey, Ann Kopke, Mary Lou Crowley, Joan Kelly & Mary Varisco.

Special thanks go to many others for their contributions and enthusiastic support: Margery MacMillan, Randy Sylvester & Jeff Wyrzten, The Duxbury Clipper, Ed Perry at WATD, Lorrie McKenna & Nicola Harrington at Adelpia Cable, Eleanor Tuttle, Deni Johnson, Fran Nichols, Burke Leahey, Lori Hume, Duxbury Gardens, Duxbury Galleries, Mr. & Mrs. Frank Lawson, Susan Nalbank, Bonnie Post, Jill Blackburn, Wendy Keleher, Marcia Solberg, Paul & Millie Knight, Colonial Dames of Boston, Betty Hills, Cam Waterhouse, Tim Leedom.

Congratulations, everyone, on a spectacular holiday event! A very Happy New Year to all!

She hopes speed will carry her through the qualifying trials Feb. 15 in Columbia, SC. Currier could then become one of 3 women marathon runners to represent the United States in the 1996 summer Olympic Games in Atlanta.

An assistant special education teacher at DJSHS, the 31-year-old petite blonde stumbled onto marathon running while studying sociology in London as a foreign exchange student.

She was not allowed to try out for the cross country team while attending Oxford University because she was an American citizen. Frustrated by the rule, she found another place to run.

"I just saw a sign go up for the London Marathon. I just decided to show up," Currier said.

There were 20,000 people in the 1985 race and Currier, with no ranking, started in the back.

"Supposedly a cannon started the race," she said. "I never heard it."

She finished as the 18th woman in the world championship race.

"I ran a 2:55. I never drank water because I didn't know you were supposed to," she added.

Currier was impressed by her first attempt and knew she was ready to try again.

"I decided, oh this is my sport," she said.

But the road to victory held many hurdles for Currier as she plotted a path to follow her dream — to run in the Olympics.

In 1992, she made it to the Olympic Trials in Houston but was slowed by several asthma attacks. "It was amazing that I even finished the race," she said.

The asthma is the recurring symptom of an April 1991 swimming pool accident in which a blast of

Currier can't do that, she says, because New Balance has given her free running shoes and wearing a club's uniform would violate her sneaker contract. Finding support for her sport has been a real challenge since she moved to Scituate in September.

While living in Griswold, CT, she found it easier to train, she said. Although teaching fulltime in an elementary school, she found more places available free of charge.

At Connecticut College in New London, she was able to run on the Coast Guard training track.

"It helped the team because I pushed the team along and inspired them and it helped me because people were there to cheer me on," she said.

"I can't imagine why people in Boston don't want to make someone's Olympic dream come true," she added.

Currier says she has found it difficult to run in town races, often charity events, without getting the entry fee waived.

"It can get pretty expensive if you have to pay it every weekend," she said. "There's no prize money. I have nothing to gain but a workout."

The sponsors she has lined up other than New Balance, are Power Bar, who has donated a box of the high-energy snack to her, and Honey Bear Bakery in Plymouth who provide her with free bagels once a week.

Although her husband, Peter, a data processor for Bradlees in Braintree, has been supportive, it is still a difficult goal to pursue.

"It is very difficult to try to work and run fulltime and train for the Olympics," she said, adding she is still hoping to get some support.

"My husband doesn't have a plane ticket to South Carolina yet. That would be nice," she grinned. She is also still looking for access to an indoor track.

But despite the obstacles she is determined to keep running.

The soft-spoken teacher recalls a poster that used to hang on her wall.